

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 COTONO 00469 01 OF 02 291449Z  
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 ONY-00 ( ISO ) W  
-----023841 291632Z /43

O 291330Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0578

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 COTONOU 0469

FOR AF/W ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PEPR, US, XY  
SUBJ: COUNTRY DATA SHEETS

REF: STATE 78166

SECTION I - THE COUNTRY: PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN

A. ECONOMIC PROFILE:

POPULATION& (THOUSANDS);

71-2792; 72-2869; 73-2948; 74-3029; 75-3112: 76-3197; 77-3286;  
78-3377.

RATE OF GROWTH: 2.8 PER ANNUM.

& THESE ARE GOVERNMENT FIGURES AND ADMITTEDLY ONLY ROUGH  
ESTIMATES.

INCOME:

(1) PER CAPITA INCOME: YRS. 1976-155 SDR. ONE SDR EQUALS  
285 FRANCS CFA. \$1 US EQUALS 230 FRANCS CFA.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 COTONO 00469 01 OF 02 291449Z

RATE OF GROWTH: NO PRECISE FIGURES AVAILABLE; HOWEVER, DUE  
TO INCREASE IN POPULATION AND LACK OF INCREASE IN REAL GNP  
(SEE BELOW), REAL PER CAPITA INCOME HAS FALLEN.

(2) GROWTH RATE: NO PRECISE FIGURES, HOWEVER, ESTIMATES  
SHOW THAT THERE WAS LITTLE IF ANY INCREASE IN REAL GROSS

DOMESTIC PRODUCT. THIS REFLECTS AGRICULTURAL STAGNATION AS A RESULT OF POOR RAINFALL, AS WELL AS THE LACK OF ADEQUATE INCENTIVES FOR CASH CROPS. (THE RESULT OF GOV'T ATTEMPTS TO FIX PRICES).

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS: (CFA BILLIONS OF - FRANCS):

73- (-) 1.32; 74 - (PLUS) 3.08; 75 - (-) 1.33; 76 - (PLUS) 1.05; 77 - (-) 2.10.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS - BENIN'S GOODS AND SERVICES DEFICIT HAS QUADRUPLED DUE BOTH TO INFLATION AND A LARGE INCREASE IN REAL IMPORTS SINCE 1973. IN CONTRAST EXPORTS INCREASED BY ONLY TWENTY PERCENT DURING SAME PERIOD. HOWEVER, THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS HAS REMAINED ON AN EVEN KEEL, DUE TO LARGE FOREIGN GRANTS (FOR THE SAHELIAN DROUGHT AND FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS), AND DUE TO LONG-TERM, CONCESSIONARY LOANS.

MAJOR EXPORTS:

PALM OIL, PALM KERNEL OIL, COTTON, COFFEE. NO SIGNIFICANT US EXPORTS OR IMPORTS.

LITERACY RATE - TWENTY PERCENT.

LIFE EXPECTANCY - 37 YEARS (1975).

PEOPLE PER DOCTOR - 34,000 (1976).

NUTRITION: DATA NOT AVAILABLE.

B. POLITICAL SITUATION:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 COTONO 00469 01 OF 02 291449Z

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN IS A ONE-PARTY STATE. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT AND CABINET MEMBERS ARE ALL MILITARY OFFICERS WHO CAME TO POWER IN A COUP D'ETAT IN 1972, A MARXIST-LENINIST POLITICAL STRUCTURE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1974 FOLLOWING BENIN'S OFFICIAL ADOPTION OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM. IN NOV 75 THE COUNTRY'S NAME WAS CHANGED FROM DAHOMEY TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN AND A SINGLE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY WAS ESTABLISHED. UNDER A NEW CONSTITUTION PROMULGATED IN AUG 77, A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IS TO BE ELECTED WITHIN A SINGLE-PARTY FRAMEWORK. FACTIONAL DISPUTES BETWEEN MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE CABINET AND CIVILIANS ON THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, HOWEVER, HAVE CAUSED ELECTIONS TO BE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY.

THREATS TO THE REGIME:

A GROUP OF FOREIGN MERCENARIES ATTACKED BENIN'S CAPITAL OF COTONOU IN JAN 77 IN AN ATTEMPT TO OVERTHROW THE MARXIST-LENINIST REGIME OF LT. COL. MATHIEU KEREKOU. THE COUP ATTEMPT WAS ALLEGEDLY LAUNCHED BY THE FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION AND REHABILITATION OF DAHOMEY, A EUROPEAN-BASED OPPOSITION GROUP.

FOLLOWING THE ABORTIVE MERCENARY ATTACK, BENIN HAS GREATLY INCREASED ITS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY MEASURES AND HAS ACQUIRED LARGE QUANTITIES OF SMALL ARMS AND OTHER MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM THE SOVIET UNION. INTERNALLY, THE REGIME HAS BEEN FACED BY PASSIVE OPPOSITION TO THE /REVOLUTION," WHICH IN THE SIX YEARS THAT THE REGIME HAS BEEN IN POWER HAS NOT TAKEN HOLD OUTSIDE OF THE URBAN AREAS. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT CONSTANTLY WARNS "MILITANT" BENINESE TO BE ALERT TO SUBVERSION FROM "COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES" AT HOME, THERE IS NO ORGANIZED OPPOSITION CAPABLE OF BRINGING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT. PEACEFUL RESISTENCE ON THE PART OF CITIZENS IN KEY SECTORS (E.G., FARMERS AND MARKET WOMEN, PORT WORKERS, ETC.) COULD, NONETHELESS, CREATE DIFFICULTIES FOR THE GOV'T.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 COTONO 00469 01 OF 02 291449Z

#### C. HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS:

ALTHOUGH BENIN'S RECORD CONTAINS SEVERAL INSTANCES OF VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREA OF POLITICAL FREEDOM, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT FOLLOWED A PATTERN OF CONSISTENT OR SYSTEMATIC GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. BENIN, HOWEVER, IS A COUNTRY WHOSE RECORD WE CONTINUE TO SCRUTINIZE AND ONE ON WHOSE ACCOUNT WE ABSTAINED ON A LOAN IN THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION IN MID 1977. THE BENINESE ARE AWARE OF AND SENSITIVE TO OUR CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY.

#### SECTION II - U.S. INTERESTS AND POLICIES:

##### A. POLITICAL INTERESTS:

THE U.S. HAS NEGLIGIBLE POLITICAL INTERESTS IN BENIN. AS THE COUNTRY IS A MEMBER OF THE MOST RADICAL WING OF THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES, WE CAN EXPECT LITTLE COOPERATION ON VOTES IN THE UNITED NATIONS. BENINESE OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US ON MANY OCCASSIONS THAT BENIN TAKES ITS CUE FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE RADICAL NON-ALIGNED GROUP ON ISSUES SUCH AS N. KOREA, GUAM, PUERTO RICO, SIONISM-AS-RACISM, ETC. SINCE BENIN ADOPTED MARXISM-LENINISM IN 1974, IT HAS VIEWED THE U.S. AS A MEMBER OF THE "IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES" AND, ALTHOUGH IT SELDOM SINGLES OUT THE U.S. FOR CRITICISM, IT IS CLEAR THAT IN MANY AREAS OF INTEREST IMPERIALISM IS USED AS A CODE WORD FOR U.S. ACTIONS. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE E.S. AND BENIN CAN BE CHARACTERIZED AS CORRECT, BUT NOT WARM.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 COTONO 00469 02 OF 02 291816Z  
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 SS-15 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----025347 291825Z /43

O 291330Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0579

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 COTONOU 469

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (SECTION III, SUBPARA B)

FOR AF/W ONLY

B. SECURITY INTERESTS:  
THE U.S. HAS NO SECURITY INTERESTS IN BENIN.

C. ECONOMIC INTERESTS:  
U.S. ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN BENIN ARE NEGLIGIBLE. THERE IS  
NO MAJOR U.S. INVESTMENT NOR ARE THERE SIGNIFICANT U.S.  
IMPORTS INTO BENIN. IN THE PAST FEW YEARS THE MAJOR U.S.  
IMPORT HAS BEEN SECOND-HAND CLOTHING TO BE SOLD IN COUNTRY  
MARKETS.

SECTION III - FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

A. U.S. BILATERAL ASSISTANCE, 1977, 78, 79

	(\$000) FISCAL YEAR		
	1977	1978	1979
FROM REGIONAL FUNDS		2602	7091 4752
FROM DIRECT BILATERAL FUNDS		140	1553 3670
	----	----	----
	2742	8644	8422

OF THE DIRECT BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO BE FURNISHED IN FY 78,  
\$864,000 IS THE ESTIMATED VALUE OF THE 4545 METRIC TONS OF PL-  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 COTONO 00469 02 OF 02 291816Z

480 FOOD THAT HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR BENIN. THERE IS NO SECURITY  
SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE TO BENIN.

B. INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTION(IFI) ASSISTANCE (\$000.)

	1977	1978	1979	
WORKD BANK - IDA	-	32,000	1	
OPEC SPECIAL FUND	-	1,600	-	
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND	-	8,000	1	

## C. OTHER DONORS (\$000.)

KUWAIT FUND FOR ARAB ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	-	7,000	-	
EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND	-	31,259	20,362	
FRANCE	13,000	-	-	
CANADA	9,000	6,000	-	
USSR	5,000	-	-	
CHINA (CREDIT)	42,000	-	-	
UNDP	2,000	2,000	-	

NOTE: A CONSORTIUM IS BEING FORMED BY THE IBRD TO FINANCE A 60 MILLION DOLLAR EXPANSION OF COTONOU' PORT. EXCEPT FOR 15 MILLION DOLLARS FROM IBRD, DONOR FINANCING DATA NOT AVAILABLE. CANADA, FRANCE, ABU DHABI, KUWAIT, NORWAY AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK ARE INTERESTED.

## SECTION IV - OBJECTIVES OF U.S. ASSISTANCE

## A. DEVELOPMENT AID

GIVEN THE STRONG LEAD TAKEN BY FRANCE IN THE LAST 3 YEARS, U.S. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO BENIN OF APPROX \$42 MILLION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 COTONO 00469 02 OF 02 291816Z

HAS BEEN LARGELY SUPPLEMENTAL AND FOCUSED ON TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY, MAINLY IN AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE. IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, THE EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON AGRICULTURE AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE. HOWEVER, ONE OF THE MORE SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS HAS BEEN ONE IN WHICH NURSE-MIDWIVES HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH/FAMILY PLANNING. FUTURE ASSISTANCE WILL EMPHASIZE HEALTH AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

## B. PL-480 - CURRENT OBJECTIVES

CURRENT OBJECTIVES OF PL-480 ARE TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS, SELECTED SCHOOL CHILDREN, AND FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMS, PL-480 IS ALSO BEING USED TO ALLEVIATE THE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT.

## C. SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE - CURRENT OBJECTIVES

THERE IS NO SUPPORTING ASSISTANCE TO BENIN.

SECTION V - OTHER INFORMATION REVELANT TO U.S. FOREIGN  
ASSISTANCE:

THE BENINESE PEOPLE ARE ESPECIALLY AWARE OF THE \$10.9 MILLION  
COTONOU BRIDGE AND DAM PROJECT CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION,  
AND THE \$12 MILLION PARAKOU-MALANVILLE ROAD PROJECT THAT IS  
ALL BUT COMPLETE. AS WELL AS BEING HIGHLY VISIBLE THESE  
PROJECTS ARE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO BENIN'S DEVELOPMENT IN  
A REGIONAL CONTEXT SINCE THEY PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SURFACE  
TRANSPORTATION LINKS BETWEEN NIGERIA, NIGER AND NEIGHBORING  
W. AFRICAN COUNTRIES. THOMPSON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** DATA, ECONOMIC REPORTS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978COTON000469  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780136-0528  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** COTONOU  
**Handling Restrictions:**  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780315/aaaaamee.tel  
**Line Count:** 289  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** 9020febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION AF  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** ONLY  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 6  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** ONLY  
**Reference:** 78 STATE 78166  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 apr 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 3174059  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** COUNTRY DATA SHEETS  
**TAGS:** PEPR, AMGT, US, XY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/9020febb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014